

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) A system for immobilizing two or more vertebrae, which system comprises two or more screws, an elongate connecting member and two or more fastening systems, wherein each screw comprises a screw body and a screw head having the shape of a portion of a sphere consisting of a first spherical surface portion between the screw body and a diametral plane orthogonal to ~~the~~ an axis of the screw body and a second spherical surface portion; and

each fastening system comprises:

a clamping member; and

a fastening member formed in one piece having the shape of a ring having a lateral wall around an axial passage, said wall including a first aperture adapted to receive and to cooperate with said clamping member and a second aperture having a first portion and a second portion, said two portions communicating with each other, the first portion and being angularly offset relative to the second portion about an axis (Y, Y') of the axial passage of the fastening member, said first portion having a diametral axis (Z, Z') substantially coinciding with that of said first aperture and a rim forming a bearing surface for said first spherical surface portion of the screw head, said second portion of the second aperture allowing the screw head to pass through it, said axial passage being adapted to receive at least one end of said connecting member and said screw head, whereby the screw head ~~may be~~ freely is introduced into the axial passage of the fastening member via said second portion of the second aperture by rotating said fastening member, with the bearing surface of the first portion of the second aperture made to face the first spherical surface portion of the screw head, ~~and, by activation of the clamping member,~~ the end of the connecting member and the screw head immobilized against rotation and against movement in translation relative to said fastening member.

8. (Currently Amended) The immobilization system according to claim 7, wherein said fastening system further comprises an intermediate member adapted to be inserted into the axial passage of the fastening member and having a first face adapted to be made to face the internal face of the wall of the fastening member, a recess opening onto said first face, forming a bearing surface for at least a portion of said second spherical surface

portion of the screw head, and a second bearing face adapted to cooperate with the ends of the connecting member whereby, when said intermediate member is inserted into the axial passage of the a connecting member, the clamping force produced by the clamping member is transmitted to said intermediate member via the end of the connecting member.

9. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 7, wherein each end of said connecting member has a substantially plane first face and a second face including a longitudinal recess defining two inclined bearing surfaces adapted to cooperate with the second spherical surface portion of the screw head.

10. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 8, wherein said intermediate member has at each end a rib projecting from its first face to cooperate with the end faces of said fastening member when the intermediate member is engaged in the axial passage of the fastening member.

11. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 8, wherein each end of the connecting member has a substantially plane first face for cooperating with the clamping member and a second face defining two substantially plane bearing surfaces for cooperating with the second face of said intermediate member.

12. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 10, wherein each end of the connecting member has a substantially plane first face for cooperating with the clamping member and a second face defining two substantially plane bearing surfaces for cooperating with the second face of said intermediate member.

13. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 8, wherein said connecting member has a circular cross section and said second face of the intermediate member includes a bearing surface that has a cross section in the shape of a circular arc adapted to receive an end of said connecting member.

14. (Previously Presented) The immobilization system according to claim 10, wherein said connecting member has a circular cross section and said second face

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of the intermediate member includes a bearing surface that has a cross section in the shape of a circular arc adapted to receive an end of said connecting member.

15. (New) The immobilization system according to claim 7, wherein the second portion has a diametral axis (T, T') offset at an angle "a" to the axis (Z, Z').